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THE CenterPOINT Press

A monthly publication of the Center for Inclusive Teaching and Learning at UW-Stevens Point

Teaching, Learning, and Working Beyond Your Comfort Zone

By Lindsay Bernhagen

It's probably not a stretch to say that everyone, at some point between March of 2020 and whenever you're reading this, has had to do a significant amount of their work in a way that they've never done it before—whether that's teaching a complicated lab online, teaching voice lessons over Zoom while simultaneously making lunch for your eLearning kids, or helping an advisee through emotional distress when you were expecting a straightforward conversation about course scheduling. At times, rising to these unfurling challenges was stimulating—maybe even thrilling! We got to break old patterns that didn't suit us or our students. We were creative and we solved old and novel problems in unexpected ways. Sometimes tried and true strategies could be adapted to

new contexts. All of that innovation should be celebrated, and we're hoping the annual teaching conference is a place to do just that.

At the same time, the last year-plus has been profoundly trying. Not all of our experiments worked the way we wanted them to—some of them probably even failed spectacularly. A lot of students simply could not thrive despite our best, most creative and compassionate efforts. And it's worth acknowledging that a lot of us, as faculty and staff, were and still are not exactly thriving either. So rather than focus only on lessons learned, successes won, and challenges met, we also want to use the teaching conference as a venue to acknowledge and attend to the discomfort that remains.

Join us for the

**26TH ANNUAL
UWSP TEACHING CONFERENCE**

**Teaching, Learning,
and Working Beyond
Your Comfort Zone**

Friday, January 21, 2022
10:30 a.m. - hybrid format

See the Call for Proposals
request on page 2.



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UWSP Annual Teaching Conference

Call For Proposals

We are seeking proposals for the 26th Annual UWSP Teaching Conference, “**Teaching, Learning, and Working Beyond Your Comfort Zone**”, to be held on Friday, January 21, 2022. In CITL tradition, we offer three conference tracks within our theme:

Innovative Solutions

Whether you identified an old or new problem that suddenly needed urgent attention due to the pandemic, what clever and creative strategies outside your comfort zone did you adopt to successfully address that challenge?

Timeless Best Practices

Though we were all doing the work of the university in different ways, certain principles of engagement, inclusion, collaboration, and motivation remained applicable. Which best practices did you find to be the most useful and transferrable to modified contexts for teaching and learning? Which are you ready to cast off or modify and why?

Tending to Burnout

Working outside our comfort zones for such an extended period of time has unsurprisingly led to a rash of burnout across industries. The World Health Organization defines burnout as “a syndrome conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed. It is characterized by three dimensions: 1) feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion; 2) increased mental distance from one’s job, or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one’s job; and 3) reduced professional efficacy.” Are you burnt out? Are your colleagues? Are your students? For this track, we invite any insights into the specific nature or cause of burnout in higher education, as well as potential mitigating strategies that could be adopted at the department/school/college/university level.

Types of Proposals:

Individual or panel sessions, 40 minutes in length

Proposal Submissions:

The electronic submission is due on or before Friday, December 3, 2021.

Notification:

Presenters will be notified by Wednesday, December 15, 2021.

[Submit Your Proposal](#)

CITL Can Help Collect Mid-Semester Student Feedback

A critical element to creating an inclusive classroom is giving students a voice in their learning. After all, they are daily participants in your classes and have unique insight as to what is helping or hindering their learning. If you are interested in gathering student feedback, the CITL team has several resources to support you.

Midterm Student Focus Groups

A midterm student focus group is a way to gather rich, contextualized information about your course and your teaching facilitated by a neutral member of the CITL team. After having an initial consultation with a CITL facilitator to learn what you would like to discover through the experience, you will schedule 20 minutes on a usual class day to step out of the room and allow the facilitator to become a “research tool” for you. The facilitator will ask your students to have small group discussions about three questions related to their learning in your course. Then, the facilitator will pull the smaller groups back into a full class discussion to summarize and clarify their feedback.

After the interview, you will meet with the CITL facilitator to review the data collected from your students – written feedback from the students’ small group discussions, and the facilitator’s impartial summary of the large group discussion. Together, you will work to interpret the comments to help you decide how you would like to address the student feedback with your class, giving you the chance to make adjustments and clarify any points of confusion for your students before the end of the

term. The feedback collected is shared confidentially only with you as the instructor.

Student Survey from a Template

[Mid-course Student Survey-SHORT-TEMPLATE](#)

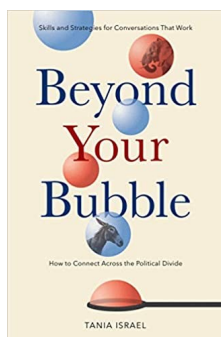
[Mid-course Student Survey-LONG-TEMPLATE](#)

Both of the above mid-course survey templates are designed to help you gauge student perceptions during the course and to allow instructors to make changes to improve learning. Mid-course surveys should be given when the course is about midway through, so that students have a decent sense of how things are going and so that you have time to make appropriate modifications and give those changes time to have an effect. Both mid-course survey templates are set to record responses anonymously, and each contains a question that gives students the option to identify themselves.

Custom Course Survey

If none of the above options suits your needs, CITL staff are always happy to help you build and implement a custom survey (either online or on paper) for your students to complete.

However you gather feedback at midterm, doing so typically results in better instructor-student communication and a greater sense of community in the classroom. Students are often impressed that the instructor took the time to ask for their feedback in a detailed manner, and in return, are more likely to respond thoughtfully on end of term evaluations.



Beyond Your Bubble Community Book Read

UWSP’s Critical Thinking Center is hosting a community book read of Tania Israel’s *Beyond Your Bubble*. Don’t lose friends over politics! Learn practical skills to connect with friends and family across today’s intense political divide. [Register by Friday, October 29](#) for a book discussion group and receive a free copy of the book.



November 2-3, 2021

Register now for the UW–Madison Diversity Forum, “Rising Above and Reshaping our World in the Image of Justice.” The 2021 Diversity Forum will be held as a hybrid in-person and virtual conference and is free and open to the public.

Faculty/Staff Safe Zone Training

Tuesday, November 16
9-11 a.m. via Zoom

Wednesday, December 15
2-4 p.m. ALB 310

[Register to Attend](#)



Help Improve Efficiency and Accuracy for Test Scoring

This semester marks the return of test scoring services at CITL, and we appreciate your patience as we make refinements to the new software and procedures.

As the volume of exam packets increases toward mid-terms and finals, we are working to streamline the process.

Instructors can assist with the efficiency and accuracy of exam processing:

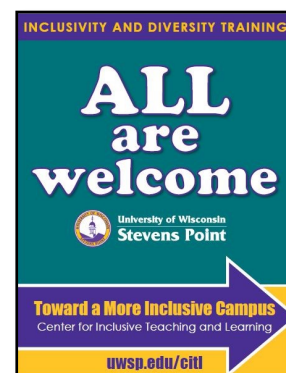
- ❖ Remind students to complete the name and student ID number fields AND also bubble the student ID number for accurate grade reporting.
- ❖ Check that the inter-departmental envelope provided with your exam packet has Name, Department, and Building completed to ensure prompt return of the packet.

Feel free to review the test scoring information on our [website](#) and contact CITL with any questions, citl@uwsp.edu.

Inclusivity Training Completed

The UW-Stevens staff members in the **Department of Biology** recently completed all sessions of UWSP inclusivity training!

The interactive workshop sessions that comprise “Toward a More Inclusive Campus” are required for all units/departments on campus. The training raises awareness of diversity and inclusivity, while teaching us to value diversity and understand how our experiences shape our choices. Participants learn how to be allies to underrepresented students and colleagues and to feel empowered to make change that enhances inclusivity.



Learn more about the training sessions on our [website](#). Departments can schedule training sessions by contacting [Lindsay Bernhagen](#).